

NEVADA COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

The Nevada County Transportation Commission (NCTC) is the Regional Transportation Planning Agency for Nevada County. NCTC coordinates state and federal transportation programs for Nevada County, the City of Grass Valley, Nevada City, and the Town of Truckee.

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Nevada County Transportation Commission Newsletter

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NEVADA COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION NEWSLETTER

Issue 8

November 2001



A PARTNERSHIP WITH CALTRANS

The Nevada County Transportation Commission (NCTC) appreciates the exceptional working relationship we have with the California Department of Transportation (better known as Caltrans). For more than 100 years Caltrans has played the role as owner and operator of the 15,000 mile State Highway System. Over time that role has evolved to include rail and mass transit. Today Caltrans understands its purpose is to provide for the mobility of people, goods, services and information. Due to increased population and congestion as well as environmental pollution, the Caltrans of the 21st Century will emphasize non-highway transportation such as inter-city passenger rail through their contract with Amtrak. They are also studying the possible development of a high-speed rail corridor, which is one of five federally designated sites in the nation. In addition to a changing mix of transportation modes, Caltrans professionals must consider such complex issues as land use and environmental standards. Annually Caltrans plans, designs, and builds almost a thousand transportation projects. Their safety record is unparalleled anywhere in the world. A traveler using a California State Highway can on average travel one million miles without an accident.*

In this issue we want to feature the NCTC relationship with Caltrans and highlight a few key individuals behind the scenes who are tireless in their efforts to promote communication between our agencies and who ensure quality planning and construction efforts. Many of our projects depend on the expertise of Caltrans District 3 personnel. As they provide a progressive and safe transportation system and are good stewards of the public's resources, their commitment to excellence and earnest desire to work in close partnership with NCTC makes them a great team to rely on.

There are twelve Caltrans districts in the State of California. District 3, based in Marysville with a satellite office in Sacramento, spans the following counties: Glenn, Colusa, Yolo, Sacramento, Sutter, Butte, Yuba, El Dorado, Sierra, Placer, and Nevada. Considering the size and diverse municipalities of the district, directing the workload is quite an undertaking. The current Director of District 3 brings 21 years of varied Caltrans experience to the table, all of which was gained in District 3. **Jody Lonergan**, the new District 3 Director as of September 2001, started her career with Caltrans in 1980 as a Transportation Planner. In 1989 she was promoted to Senior Transportation Planner and was named chief of three different planning branches. Ms. Lonergan was then promoted to the District Division Chief of Planning in 1992, and four years later became the North Region Environmental and District 3 Planning Division Chief where she supervised a staff of 150.

Ms. Lonergan has been married 24 years to husband Mark, who is the Deputy Chief Operating Officer for Sacramento Regional Transit. She is the mother of two teenagers and is also an active member of her church. Jody is a resident of Granite Bay and a graduate of UC Davis where she earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science. Upon taking over her new position, Jody commented, "I am looking forward to the challenges of this new position. We have many exciting improvements under development to provide mobility for the people in District 3." The staff and Commissioners of the Nevada County Transportation Commission welcome Jody Lonergan in this new position and we look forward to continuing our productive and cohesive partnership.

*This information was taken from Caltrans' website. (Caltrans Personnel continued on page 2)

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Upcoming NCTC Meeting

The next meeting of the Nevada County Transportation Commission (NCTC) will be held **Wednesday, November 21, 2001 at 8:30 a.m.**, in the **Grass Valley City Council Chambers, 125 East Main Street, Grass Valley, California.**



More Landscaping Planned For Brunswick Interchange

LANDSCAPE PROJECT FOR BRUNSWICK INTERCHANGE

Have you ever driven along a freeway and appreciated the natural beauty of the terrain? Many times that "natural" look has come about through extensive planning to include vegetation native to the area and compatible with the climate of the location.

Caltrans provides their expertise once again in the person of Tom O'Donnell, a retired Caltrans Landscape Architect, who volunteers his time for projects like ours. Tom has offered to spend part of his retirement time developing a landscape plan for the Brunswick interchange. He was at District 3 for 30 years and has worked on other landscape projects in Nevada County. He is also familiar with the maintenance and water issues involved in this type of project. Tom is a resident of Rough and Ready.

PARTNERSHIP WITH CALTRANS (Continued)

One of the key players in our day-to-day interaction with Caltrans is our District Liaison, **Ann Marie Robinson**. Her focus is on long-range regional planning aspects within Caltrans as it relates to Nevada County. Ann Marie’s ability to get things moving within the Caltrans infrastructure and to help facilitate an agreeable consensus between the agencies and municipalities involved is quite commendable as she “goes to bat” for Nevada County. Some of her duties as the IGA/CEQA (Intergovernmental review/California Environmental Quality Act) coordinator is to review all projects with potential impact on the State Highways throughout Nevada County. She also works with the Sacramento Regional Transit regarding their mass transportation projects for light rail in Sacramento County. Ann Marie is also working with the City of South Lake Tahoe regarding their intermodal station, which will be under construction soon.

Ann Marie came from a small rural town of 250 people and feels her background helps in her daily tasks with Nevada County, by having a firm grasp of rural living. She began her career with Caltrans 28 years ago in the Drafting Program. During Governor Brown’s administration there was a major lay off of Caltrans workers, so Ann Marie went to work for the State Lands Commission for 15 years and surveyed the wetlands of California. During that time she completed her BA in Social Work and her Masters in Community Organization and Public Administration. She worked for the Department of Social Services for 9 months and then transferred back to Caltrans. Ann Marie spent 10 years in the New Technology Program, then Traffic Operation, then Mass Transit, and finally to District 3 two years ago.

As a single mom with an eight-year-old son, you can find her driving from soccer field to soccer field during her time away from the office.



Another very important person in our Caltrans partnership is **Doug Hobbs**, a Project Manager for District 3 assigned to Nevada County. Doug’s willingness to “go the extra mile” is apparent as he spearheads many of our projects, negotiates start dates, and helps move projects toward completion. Doug has worked for Caltrans 14 years in a variety of positions, starting in District 3 in 1990. He has been in his current position as Project Manager for the last year and a half, overseeing projects in Nevada and Sierra counties. In this position Doug is responsible for developing project scope, cost and schedules, and managing the development of the project through construction once it has been funded and programmed.

Doug works with NCTC to develop project scopes, as well as support budgets and schedules for projects funded with RTIP (Regional Transportation Improvement Program) dollars. In his position, he is a liaison between NCTC, Nevada County, and Caltrans for information on Caltrans projects in our county.

Doug is a Nevada County resident. Prior to working for Caltrans he worked in the timber industry.



Caltrans Trivia
DID YOU KNOW ...

How many orange cones does Caltrans use?

Caltrans purchases approximately 41,000 traffic cones annually and has approximately 60 to 80 thousand on hand statewide.

What are those little bumps in between the lanes on the freeway?

Those are known as “Botts’ Dots”, or raised pavement markers. Dr. Elbert D. Botts, working in the Caltrans materials testing lab in Sacramento in 1953 came upon the idea of using a raised pavement marker to help the painted line separating lanes last longer. After many refinements, the use of Botts’ Dots was mandated for all California freeways except in areas where they would be damaged by snow removal. The little “dots” have since been adopted around the world. In addition to the original intention, the markers also serve as a safety benefit to alert motorists when they drift out of their lane. There are an estimated 20 million Botts’ Dots in place today on California freeways and highways – a lasting legacy to Dr. Botts who passed away in 1962.

How do highways and bridges get named after people?

Only the California State Legislature can officially name a state highway. This is done in the form of a “Concurrent Resolution”, which can be introduced by either the Assembly or the Senate. The resolution will appear in the statutes of the year it was passed. Once done, Caltrans puts up signs which are paid for by the sponsors or friends of the person it is being named after.

Why doesn’t California number its interchanges?

California does not utilize a numbering system for interchanges, since it was a pioneer in using a Post Mile (PM) system for determining a precise location on a highway. California post miles begin and end at county lines rather than at a state border. The Federal Highway Administration required interchange exit numbers on interstate highways in the 1950s; long after California’s system was in place. They granted California an exception from displaying interchange exit numbers since conversion of the system would have been an inefficient expenditure of effort, time, and tax dollars. To convert the system and all the records of traffic information and accidents would have cost an estimated \$40 million.

Important Events in Caltrans History:

1769 – California’s first road, El Camino Real, was established by Spanish explorers Father Junipero Serra and Governor Don Gaspar de Portola which linked the 21 coastal missions from San Diego to Sonoma. The 700 mile road had missions spaced one day’s journey apart by horse. In the early 1900’s about 450 mission bells were erected along El Camino Real, but because of theft and vandalism the number dwindled to about 75. In response, the Legislature appointed Caltrans as guardian of the bells in 1974, making them responsible for repairing and replacing them.

1855 – Surveyor General S. H. Marlette commissioned the first formal survey toward construction of a wagon road across the Sierra Nevada, roughly where U.S. Highway 50 is today from Placerville to Nevada.

1895 – The Bureau of Highways is created by the Legislature. The three newly appointed officials, R. C. Irvine of Sacramento, Marsden Manson of San Francisco, and J. L. Maude of Riverside, purchased a buckboard and visited every county of the state during 1895 and 1896. They covered some 7,000 miles through the coast, valley, mountains, and deserts. Their recommended highway system became the foundation of the system that exists today.

1896 – Lake Tahoe Wagon Road deeded to California, becomes the first state highway.

(This information was taken from Caltrans’ website.)

NEVADA COUNTY NARROW GAUGE RAILROAD MUSEUM NEARS COMPLETION



Old Nevada City Freight & Passenger Terminal



New construction of museum building

Nevada County is proud of its history and works hard to preserve the images that are unique to our area. As we strive to ensure this heritage for present and future generations, many agencies work hand-in-hand to protect and restore structures and to display historical equipment and documentation of our past. Since transportation has always been a focal point in man’s existence, it is no wonder the narrow gauge railroad system of Nevada County carries heightened interest as it relates to our pioneering past. Combine that with railroad enthusiasts and you have community involvement of volunteers and officials who have worked hard to bring about our Railroad Museum located at the end of Bost Avenue in Nevada City.

The museum, when completed, will resemble the original Nevada City Freight and Passenger Terminal that was located nearby, but was torn down in 1962 to make way for the Golden Center Freeway. In addition, a machine shop of the 1876-1942 period will be constructed where volunteers will continue efforts to restore and rebuild rolling stock. Nevada City has overseen the planning and construction of the museum. It will be operated by the Nevada County Historical Society. As you can see from the photo, the building is nearing completion and Nevada City has planned a dedication ceremony for December, with a grand opening coming next spring. Watch for the specific date in December and plan to join the festivities.

NCTC’s role in the project was to acquire partial funding for the museum. The California Transportation Commission (CTC) authorizes funding for transportation related projects that enhance quality of life through the TEA (Transportation Enhancement Activities) Program. This funding is made possible through the passage of the Federal Transportation Equity Act of the 21st Century (TEA-21). TEA projects require a minimum of 12% local funds to be applied to the total project cost. In past years the Nevada County Transportation Commission received and utilized TEA grant funding for the restoration of the historic Bridgeport Covered Bridge and the Donner Summit Bridge. The City of Grass Valley recently utilized TEA funds to improve pedestrian facilities along Freeman Lane. Other projects approved for TEA funding but not yet started include the Truckee River Trail Project, Bear River Park and Recreation District Overland Emigrant Trail Project, and the South County Combie Road Class I Bike Path Project.

LIGHTS INSTALLED

After many meetings and discussions on traffic safety issues, the historical appearance of traffic poles, granite rock outcroppings, and running out of funds, we are pleased to say the four-way traffic signal at North Bloomfield and State Road 49 in Nevada City is operational. We appreciate everyone’s patience in the construction phase of the project as traffic delays gave way to traffic efficiency and added safety at one of the busiest intersections along this portion of SR 49.

Looking East at SR 49 and No. Bloomfield Road / Broad Street Intersection



**NEVADA COUNTY DRAFT
REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN (RTP)**

The RTP documents the policy direction, actions, and funding strategies designed to maintain and improve the regional transportation system. The RTP promotes a continuous, comprehensive, and cooperative transportation planning process that facilitates the efficient development and implementation of projects while maintaining Nevada County’s commitment to public health and environmental quality.

The preparation of this RTP update will bring the previously adopted January 2000 Nevada County RTP into compliance with the California Transportation Commission’s updated Regional Transportation Plan Guidelines. The additions being made in this update of the Nevada County RTP are minor and do not require any additional projects beyond those previously listed in the January 2000 Nevada County RTP. As a result, the additions and modifications to the existing document will not cause any new environmental impacts that were not examined in the previous Environmental Impact Report (EIR), State Clearinghouse #99072038. An addendum to the previous EIR will be prepared discussing how this update of the RTP will not create any new environmental impacts, and that the previous mitigation measures remain adequate.

The Draft RTP is available for review and comment at the office of the Nevada County Transportation Commission. **The deadline to submit comments on the draft RTP is December 7th by 5:00 P.M.**